



Seattle Office for Civil Rights Seattle Commission for Sexual Minorities



eNewsletter, Issue 3

December 2008

www.seattle.gov/scsm

Our Mission

To effectively address and pre-sent the concerns of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered citizens of Seattle to the Mayor, City Council, and all City Departments.

Commissioners

Charlie Butler, Co-Chair
Allena Gabosch, Co-Chair (Interim)

NaaSira Abdeena
Aurea Astro
David Beard
Lillie Cridland
Joseph Daniels
Cristina Dodson
Beth Gappert
Shelley Ho
Tom Hubbard
David Iseminger
Aiden Key
Jean-Paul Page
Joseph Siddiq
Mauraan C. Schultz

What's Happening? CALENDAR of EVENTS

JANUARY

January 7 Deaf LGBT Coffee Nights

First Saturday of every month, 7:00PM at Starbucks
1600 E. Olive Way, Seattle
All welcome regardless of ASL skill.

January 10 Gay Bingo

at South Lake Union Navel Reserve Building
Lifelong AIDS Alliance

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Happy New Year!

Holiday Greetings from your Commissioners

Greetings and happy holidays on behalf of the Seattle Commission for Sexual Minorities! As the light begins to break on the New Year, the Commission and the City of Seattle are re-energized with hope and growing aspirations for our community. President-elect Obama brings the promise of change to make this a better nation for everyone. The impact of Proposition 8 in California has re-ignited the LGBTQ equality movement. We are optimistic that 2009 will bring new focus and direction to the LGBTQ community; in time and through great effort, our voices will be heard.

While the passage of 2008 has brought positive changes to our national political stage, the global economy struggles to stay afloat with significant impact to every business sector. For our LGBTQ individuals and families, the Commission would like to encourage each and every one of our constituents to view this as a special opportunity to reach out to a family, individual, or organization in need. Those of you exchanging gifts this year might consider making a donation in someone's name to a worthwhile cause, as opposed to making a purchase this holiday season. Some of our local LGBTQ organizations, such as [Lifelong Aids Alliance](#), [Gay City](#), [Seattle Counseling Service](#) and the [Pride Foundation](#) would no doubt welcome the assistance. Also, volunteering your time to a local community organization, such as [Big Brothers, Big Sisters](#), the [Lambert House](#), or [Camp Ten Trees](#), would help to spread generosity, humility, and warmth during the grey winter months.

As far as continuing to support the battle for LGBTQ equality, especially in the struggle for marriage rights, the Commission would suggest donations to organizations such as the [National Center for Lesbian Rights](#), [Human Rights Campaign](#) and [Lambda Legal](#), who, along with the American Civil Liberties Union, are spearheading the appeal in California. If you prefer making donations to local organizations, groups such as [Equal Rights Washington](#) and [Out and Equal, Seattle](#) would greatly appreciate your support!

In 2009, the Commission will continue our commitment to bring the Seattle LGBTQ community together by addressing the key issues of the day through community unity, business advocacy, safety, and the support of health and human services. But right now, we will offer a simple wish of peace, joy, and hope during this time of monumental change in our nation's history. May you and yours have a wonderful holiday season and a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year!

Warm regards,
Your Seattle Commission for Sexual Minorities

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Cristina Dodson

H.M. Aity

Lillie Cridland

Aurea Astro

NaaSira Abdeena

Allena Gabosch

David M. Page

CRB

DAVE

Tom Hubbard

David S. Beard

Joseph

Aiden Key

Shelley Ho

Nuraan C. Schultz

Beth Gappert

January 15
Seattle Commission
for Sexual Minorities
Monthly Meeting
6:30PM-8:30PM
City Hall (L2)
Public Welcome
[Email for more info](#)

January 19
GSBA Prime Time Mixer
5:30PM-7:30PM
W Hotel, Seattle

January 31
Silver Forum for
Seniors, hosted by the
Seattle Commission
for Sexual Minorities
11:00am-1:00pm
Faerland Terrace
1421 Minor, Seattle
[Email for more info](#)

FEBRUARY

February 18
Aids Action &
Awareness Day in
Olympia
Lifelong AIDS Alliance

February 19
Seattle Commission
for Sexual Minorities
Monthly Meeting
6:30PM-8:30PM
City Hall (L2)
Public Welcome
[Email for more info](#)

February 21
Gay Bingo
at South Lake Union
Navel Reserve Building
Lifelong AIDS Alliance

MARCH

March 7
6:00PM-Midnight
3rd Annual Equal
Rights Gala
Equal Rights
Washington

March 12
9:30-3:00PM
Equality Day in
Olympia
Equal Rights
Washington

March 19
Seattle Commission
for Sexual Minorities
Monthly Meeting
6:30PM-8:30PM
City Hall (L2)
Public Welcome
[Email for more info](#)

March 21

Queer Youth Speak Out

Over a dozen youth and several representatives from organizations serving youth gathered on October 7th for the Queer Youth Forum hosted by the Seattle Commission for Sexual Minorities. The goal of the event was to engage LGBTQ Seattle youth (ages 14-23) in conversation about their perspective on how well the City of Seattle currently serves the young LGBTQ community in Seattle and what the City could be doing better. SCSM plans to use the feedback and recommendations from the forum to help create its work plan for 2009. Held at the Cascade People's Center, attendees enjoyed a casual dinner where youth, providers and SCSM Commissioners could informally get to know each other before sitting down for a moderated discussion.

In order to ensure an open environment for the youth, providers were taken into a separate room for their own discussion about the needs of the community from their perspective. Moderators guided each discussion with the goal of getting a big picture view of issues affecting LGBTQ youth as well as specifics about how the City and SCSM could be a better partner working on these issues. A key finding from both groups was that youth needed to have a bigger voice in the LGBTQ community and particularly in planning youth oriented activities, outreach, events, and services. A second concern raised in both discussions was the difficulty that many young people faced when they age out of youth services. Both groups acknowledged that once an individual aged out of certain programs, there was little support or guidance to help them transition to adult services.

In the youth discussion group, they stressed the need for an inclusive youth movement that values the diversity of the LGBTQ community and recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to youth services. The provider discussion focused more heavily on the specific services currently being provided to youth and how those could be improved. Providers also agreed that a major challenge to providing LGBTQ youth services was that it was hard to identify who the population was, how best to reach them, and what they most needed.

Lively discussion and thoughtful responses to SCSM's questions led both groups to talk longer than expected. Participants expressed an interest in continuing the dialog and hoped that the Queer Youth Forum would be just the beginning in a more concerted effort to engage LGBTQ youth in the issues of the community. Commissioners left with a better idea of how to partner with LGBTQ youth and new respect for the energy, intelligence and passion of the next generation of leaders.

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Commissioner Highlight: Meet Lillie Cridland



I'm Lillie Cridland and I've been a Commissioner for just over one year. I began serving on the Commission through the Get Engaged program, a joint effort between the YMCA and the Mayor's Office to get young people involved in City government. I first applied to the Commission because I had been working on political campaigns but was not very involved in what happened after people were elected and actually started serving in office, I felt the need to get more engaged on the issues most affecting me and joined the Commission so I could become an advocate for LGBTQ interests in City government.

Since joining the Commission, I have become very interested in the issue of neighborhood planning, particularly as it relates to Capitol Hill. While I don't live on the Hill, I view it as a community resource for LGTBQ people across Seattle (and also those who visit our great city). My interest is in maintaining this 'safe space' for LGTBQ people, regardless of whatever development or physical changes may occur on the Hill. I look forward to continuing to work on this issue with the Commission as the City begins its work on updating its neighborhood plans.

Currently, I'm serving on the Community Relations subcommittee which is responsible for outreach into the community. We recently held a forum to discuss issues affecting LGBTQ youth in Seattle to find out how we, as a Commission, could address these issues better. We are also planning a 'Silver Forum' to assess needs in the senior community and find out how we can be a partner in making Seattle a better place for mature LGBTQ people.

Though the Commission keeps me busy, I do have a day job working as a Communications Specialist for the Washington State Nurses Association. I create a variety of communications materials supporting quality patient care, nurse wellbeing and the advancement of the nursing profession. My prior work experience includes public affairs consulting, political campaigns, work with Seattle youth, and voter education efforts.

I was born and raised in Seattle and now live in Columbia City with my partner and energetic dog, Tex.

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New LGBT Initiative from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound

"I have wanted to volunteer as a mentor for a long time but I wasn't sure how an organization, child or family would handle my sexual orientation, let alone my gender identity. When I was told that there was a Little who was questioning his gender identity, it seemed like a perfect fit. I can tell that my Little Brother Shawn feels himself around me, and I know that he knows he can express his gender identity in whatever way feels most comfortable for him when we are together, as do I."
- Big Brother Chris

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound is proud to announce our LGBT Initiative. Our LGBT Initiative exists to outreach to members of LGBT communities in the Puget Sound region to become volunteer mentors to share their time and experiences with children and young people in the community. We also have a commitment to reaching out to LGBT families and LGBT children and youth to let them know caring adult mentors are available for any child who needs or wants one.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound partners with actively involved community members to match caring adults with children, both of whom benefit from our one-to-one mentoring programs. Bigs (adult volunteers) and Littles (children ages 7-18) meet a few

6:00PM
Black Tie Bingo Benefit
Lifelong AIDS Alliance

March 28
Gay Bingo
at South Lake Union
Navel Reserve Building
Lifelong AIDS Alliance

Got an Event?
[Email the Commission](#)

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Media & Marketing Committee

Contact the Commission Media & Marketing Committee and tell us what you think!

[Email Us!](#)
Phone: (206) 902-6447

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Contact Us!

Contact your Commissioners in any of the following ways:

[Email Us!](#)
Phone: (206) 902-6447
or visit our website:
www.seattle.gov/scsm

times a month in school or the community to share fun activities and a little part of themselves.

National research has shown that the positive relationships between youth and their Big Brothers and Big Sisters have a direct and measurable impact on children's lives. Compared to their non-mentored peers, Little Brothers and Sisters are:

- More confident in their schoolwork performance
- Able to get along better with their families
- 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- 27% less likely to begin using alcohol
- 52% less likely to skip school

As Big Brother Chris States, at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound, "LGBT identities are not only accepted but seen as an asset to reflecting the full range of identities that BBBSPS is trying to represent in their Bigs and Littles." Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound is committed to providing activities and opportunities for LGBT Bigs and Littles – in the past few months we have sponsored a Gay and Lesbian Film Festival movie, tabled at the Seattle AIDS Walk and Rainbow Families pumpkin patch event, and talked with over a dozen LGBT organizations and groups in the area.

Please consider volunteering to become a mentor. You can make a BIG difference in the life of a child by committing a few hours a month to just hanging out with a young person.

If you're interested in becoming a mentor, or if you know a young person who is interested in benefitting from our program, please contact Jesse Gilliam at jesse.gilliam@bbbs.org or 206-763-9060x103.

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How Can You Get "Out in Front"?

How will we keep our service organizations strong? Who will carry on our legacy? Do younger generations care about their community? Do we still need LGBT specific organizations? How will greater civil rights change our missions? With November's passage of Proposition 8 in California, which denies marriage rights to same-sex couples, it is clear that our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community needs strong leadership.

You may have attended "Work It" in May at Café Metropolitan. That event was held, coincidentally, on the day the California Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality. Over 60 attendees completed surveys and demonstrated a strong interest in a leadership training program specifically for Seattle's LGBT community.

With Prop 8's reversal of the court's decision, it is even more evident that our community must prepare the next generation of community leaders. We must effectively address our urgent needs, not only for civil rights, but also for quality healthcare, workplace fairness, neighborhood and school safety, economic security, and other issues facing the LGBT community.

In the spring of 2008, nearly 100 potential new leaders demonstrated their desire to grapple with these questions by attending a kick-off event. With this mandate, a group of veteran leaders has joined with rising next generation leaders to ensure the continued strength of Seattle's LGBT community by training talented community members for service. Using strategic and thoughtful planning, a community survey and interviews, the group has designed a program suited to the current needs of both emerging leaders and existing organizations.

The Out In Front Steering Committee is pleased to announce a 2009 Pilot Project. The program will consist of classroom instruction, mentoring, personal development, and community involvement. A pilot training program will launch in late February 2009 for 12-15 participants. Over six months, students will gain the essential skills and understanding necessary to serve on non-profit boards or lead the community in other roles. The intergenerational Steering Committee seeks to build bridges between those who have dedicated many years to LGBT causes and those with less experience in order to carry on a continuous and evolving community history. Initially, the program will focus on engaging young people in service.

This endeavor is lead by Michael Auch, David Beard, Michael Gilmore, Marsha Botzer, Lonnie Lusardo, Anna Markee, Senator Ed Murray, Jeff Sakuma, and Uriel Ybarra.

You can keep up with Out in Front at the following:

<http://www.outinfrontseattle.blogspot.com/>

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King County Budget Cut Impacts LGBT Health Services

The declining economy has not only impacted business and industry, but budget shortfalls at the city, county and state levels have resulted in decisions to reduce coverage of health care and reduce health prevention programs. How does this impact the LGBT community? The outcome of the budget shortfall is resulting in program cuts. The Commission, along with human services advocates, worked with City Council members to avoid the cut of the only publicly funded LGBT Competence Training in Seattle. This program, managed by the Northwest Network, offers LGBT awareness training to health care providers that work with the most vulnerable populations in our community. While this training was saved in the short term, there is still the potential of a cut should the city budget continue to decline.

A dramatic change in funding is being seen in HIV prevention. Public Health is supported by both the City of Seattle and King County. The City of Seattle decided to maintain its 50% financial responsibility directed toward HIV prevention, but the King County Council voted to cut that expenditure. One of the immediate results of this decision is that Seattle-King County Public Health cut a health resource line and will use a national resource line. Cuts to HIV/AIDS programs are also possible at the state level due to the multi-billion dollar deficit.

The Commission has serious concerns for the health and well being of the LGBT Community as we suspect that these budget cuts may cause a serious impact. We will continue to update you on policy and funding issues relevant to our community.

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Thank You and Farewell to Eileen Terry, Commissioner, Co-Chair

The Commission would like to extend a special thank you to former Commission Co-Chair, Eileen Terry, who left our group earlier in the year to pursue other professional and community interests. Eileen served and supported our Community on the Commission for almost 2 years.

Best of luck to you, Eileen, in all your future endeavors!

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